

Washington State Conservation Commission

FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2020

[HTTP://SCC.WA.GOV/OFP/](http://SCC.WA.GOV/OFP/)



Farmland Preservation Newsletter Announcement

There will be a gap in newsletters following the February edition. The Office of Farmland Preservation is undergoing a staffing change with the current coordinator having accepted another position within the Washington State Conservation Commission. The agency will be in the process of recruiting and hiring a new coordinator in the coming months. Check back in early February on the SCC job postings page at <https://scc.wa.gov/job-postings/> or <http://careers.wa.gov/> for job details when posted.

2020 Legislative Highlights

January 13th marked the start of the state's legislative session. The legislature in 2020 has 60 days to conduct their business meaning shorter windows for public hearings, passage of legislation, and passage of supplemental budgets.

February 7 marks the policy committee cutoff meaning bills in policy committees need to have had action to move from committee. Just a few days later, on February 11, bills with a fiscal impact need to have been moved from their respective policy committee. Bills that have passed a policy and fiscal committee then need floor action which begins on the 12th and concludes on the 19th.



For calendars and agendas, go to: <http://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Calendar.aspx>

The Office of Farmland Preservation tracks legislation as it relates to agricultural viability, regulatory impacts, protection of farmland, land use, and other topics related to viability of farmland.

Certain bills of interest:

Bill Number	Bill Title	Bill Effect
SHB 2136	Farm Internship Program	Extends the farm internship program until December 31, 2025 and expands program to all counties.
HB 2866	Transfer of water rights	Prohibit transfers of water rights out of their original water resource inventory area and adds a local public interest component.
SB 6091	WA food policy forum	Establishes the Washington Food Policy Forum as a public-private partnership for developing recommendations to advance certain food system goals.
SB 6544	GMA/ Agricultural Land	Allows consideration of innovative zoning techniques and other measures to encourage the success of the agricultural economy regardless of urban growth area boundaries.
		Removes a provision requiring nonagricultural accessory uses and activities to be located within areas already development for buildings and residential uses on ag land.
		Adds measures related to permitting efficiencies that counties and cities may consider to encourage agricultural business.

Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!

Email frequency is once a month

Sign up on the web at: [HTTP://SCC.WA.GOV/OFP/](http://SCC.WA.GOV/OFP/)

Grants

<p>Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Grant</p> <p>BFRD has resources available to promote education, mentoring, and technical assistance. Partnerships and collaborations led by or including nongovernmental, community-based organizations and school-based agricultural, educational organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training are encouraged to apply</p> <p>Applications due 20 March, 2020.</p> <p>Learn more</p>	<p>Farmers' Guide to the Value-Added Producer Grant Program Updated</p> <p>The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition has released an updated version of its Farmers' Guide to Applying for the Value Added Producer Grant Program. It includes everything interested producers need to know about VAPG to determine if the program is a good fit for their operation. The deadline to submit paper applications in-person or via mail is March 10, 2020; the deadline to submit electronic applications is March 5, 2020. Electronic applications must be submitted through grants.gov.</p>	<p>AFRI Small and Medium-Sized Farms Grants</p> <p>The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) - Foundational and Applied Science Program includes a grant category for Agriculture Economics and Rural Communities, and one priority within this area is Small and Medium-Sized Farms. Standard, Conference, and FASE (Strengthening Standard, New Investigator, Strengthening Conference, Seed, Equipment, and Sabbatical). Grants are available for this priority area in amounts up to \$500,000. Grants support research with education or extension. Applications are due by March 5, 2020.</p>
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In Short

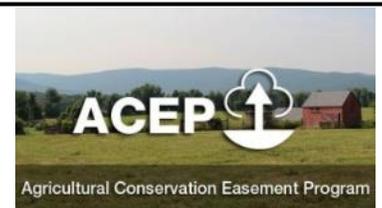
<p>ARS Ecologists Address a Burning Question</p> <p>When it comes to restoring rangeland habitats, there is no replacement for "prescribed fire," according to Agricultural Research Service (ARS) ecologists. Research compared the benefits of mowing rangelands with setting them on fire to rid them of unwanted debris and reset their ecological balance. Researchers found in a recent study that fire is better than mowing because it restores soil health and promotes growth of grass that is more nutritious for grazing cattle. More</p>	<p>Monthly newsletters from the USDA Northwest Climate Hub</p> <p>The Northwest Climate Hub publishes a monthly newsletter with regionally relevant information including drought status updates, webinars, conferences, funding opportunities and highlights of current research, management strategies and adaptation tactics. You can read the newsletter here, or receive notification when the newsletter is available via email by signing up via this link and providing your information on the form.</p>	<p>RCO 2020 Grants Webinar February 13</p> <p>RCO is kicking off the grant application season with a webinar on February 13, 9:30—11:30 am.</p> <p>The Webinar will give you information about grant programs, deadlines, requirements, changes for 2020, and how to apply for a grant. This Webinar will focus on a number of programs including WWRP Farm and Forest categories. Grants due May 1, 2020. Webinar will be recorded.</p> <p>Register here.</p>
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USDA: Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

USDA Invites Input on Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Rule

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) seeks public comments on its interim rule for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), USDA's premier conservation easement program that helps landowners protect working agricultural lands and wetlands.

The rule – now available on the Federal Register – takes effect upon publication and includes changes to the program prescribed by the 2018 Farm Bill. Comments accepted through March 20 on [federal register](#). [Read More](#)



In Short

National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries releases 4th Quarter Farmland Index

The NCREIF Farmland Index is a quarterly time series composite return measure of investment performance of a large pool of individual farmland properties acquired in the private market for investment purposes only. All properties in the Farmland Index have been acquired, at least in part, on behalf of tax-exempt institutional investors - the great majority being pension funds. All of the ten NCREIF regions registered positive total returns in the fourth quarter. The Pacific Northwest (2.57%) led regional performance for the quarter.

[Click here to see the returns](#)

Solar leases: National Ag Law Center guides outline what you need to know

Two guides to help landowners navigate solar leases are available from the National Agricultural Law Center.

The **Farmland Owner's Guide to Solar Leasing** helps landowners understand solar energy development and the solar leasing process.

A second publication, **Understanding Solar Energy Agreements**, provides information for landowners considering and negotiating leases.

[Learn more here](#)

Job: Project Manager/Senior Project Manager: Agriculture and Floodplain Resilience

The Snohomish Conservation District is looking for someone with strong project management skills and a background in both habitat restoration and agricultural viability to serve as a Project Manager for our organization. The Project Manager will develop and manage implementation of complex multi-benefit projects in the floodplains of the Snohomish and Stillaguamish Rivers.

To Apply: Visit <https://snohomishcd.org/employment>

Applications due February 9

WA State Farmers Market Association Annual Conference

Attend the 2020 Washington Farmers Market Conference in Tacoma on February 20-22 to make your farmers market stronger by learning about the trends, technical changes, and smart practices; creating the market that works for your community, and succeeding in realizing your market vision!

This conference is for farmers market organizers -- staff, volunteers, board members, vendors, community partners -- whether this is your first season or your fifteenth. We welcome farmers markets that are bringing good food and local farms into communities of every size and every corner of the Pacific Northwest. This coming together of experience and energy is just what you need to launch your season!

Learn more and register at: <http://wafarmersmarkets.org/conference-2020/>



Free Tool: Farm Lease Builder—and other resources

The Vermont Law School's Center for Agriculture and Food Systems recently developed a new free tool developed for farmers and landowners: the [Farm Lease Builder](#)

The Farm Lease Builder guides you through important common issues in farmland leases and helps you create a roadmap for your landlord/tenant relationship. Thinking things through ahead of time and getting them down on paper protects your time, money, and emotional investment in your farmland. The Farm Lease Builder creates a lease draft that is customized to your needs. The draft lease is created in an easy-to-edit Word document. And if you don't finish the draft lease in one sitting, you can save your work and easily come back to complete it.

The Lease Builder is just one component of their [Farmland Access Legal Toolkit](#), a comprehensive resource designed to help farmers and landowners affordably access, transfer, and conserve farmland.

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

San Juan County Agricultural Summit: February 7-8—Orcas

[Gather with 150+ local farmers](#), food producers and more for a weekend of education, inspiration, and community. hands-on workshops around Orcas on Friday morning and afternoon. Saturday Trade Show, youth presentations, and a Buyer-Producer Meetup. 12 breakout sessions on policy, marketing, soil, livestock, and more. Featuring keynote Dr. Jennifer Moore-Kucera, Climate Initiative Director at American Farmland Trust. [Flyer here](#)

South Sound Food Summit 2020 Saturday, March 14, 2020

WHO: South Sound Food Systems Network
WHAT: South Sound Food Summit
WHEN: Saturday, March 14, 2020. Workshops run from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Starting at 12 p.m., the Food Summit Market will feature local CSAs, food vendors, info booths, and more.
WHERE: Lacey Community Center, 6729 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98503.
[Learn more and register](#)

Ties to the Land: Succession Planning for Family Farms, Ranches and Working Forests

March 14th 8:30am-4:30pm, Building 9, TwispWorks Campus, Twisp
Ties to the Land is an award-winning curriculum developed to help families maintain ties to working lands, from generation to generation. Workshop participants will explore the aspects of transferring a farm, ranch or working forest from one generation to the next. [Details and registration here](#)
Register by March 10th.

Basic Financial Workshop Feb. 13 Spokane, WA, 9 am—4 pm

NW Farm Credit Servies will be offering a financial workshop focused on financial management for agriculture with hands-on workshops that teach fundamental skills in a fun and interactive environment. All family members and employees involved in record keeping or financial planning should attend.
To Register: <http://cloud.go.northwestfcs.com/BasicFinancial>

February 4-6: Spokane Ag Expo

The largest farm machinery show in the Inland Northwest. More than 250 ag suppliers and service companies all under one roof. Held at the Spokane Convention Center. The Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum is a 3 day event that takes place every February in Spokane, WA, and brings together agriculture professionals from across the Northwest.
Learn more!
<https://www.agshow.org/attendees>

Family Business Succession Retreat—Feb 18-20

Attend this three-day retreat to begin building your succession and estate plan with the support of family business, tax and legal experts – all in one place!
Attendance: Northwest FCS customers are given priority on a first come, first serve basis. Others may register at the link and be added to a wait list.
[Learn more](#)



“OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES.”